

ISLAM

The importance of interaction

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

There is a tradition that appears in various books of Hadith. In the words of one narration the Prophet is said to have remarked: "A believer who engages with people and is patient when he faces annoyance from them shall have greater reward than him who neither interacts with others nor remains patient over the troubles caused by them." (*Musnad Ahmad, hadith no. 23098*).

These words of the Prophet stress the importance of social interaction. A scholar comments on this report in these words: "A life of social interaction is better than a life of solitude." (*Tuhfat al-Ahwazi, 7/177*). The superiority of life of interaction is not just in an ethical sense. More than this is the importance of such a life in terms of personality development.

One can avail of the benefits of a life of interaction only if one has the necessary seriousness about life. One should be willing to think deeply about things and to learn from others. If that is there, then every interaction you have can become a means for your intellectual development. When one interacts with others, one faces different sorts of experiences. One learns new things from them. Interaction with others provides a person the opportunity to reform his own thinking. One gains the chance to expand one's knowledge.

These benefits of social interaction can be had only by someone who has the spirit of learning, someone who is able to see things in an unprejudiced and objective way. Such a person willingly acknowledges others. He is a person who is ready to accept criticism of his opinions by others. He gauges views and opinions on the basis of truth, not on the basis of whose views and opinions they are. He is what can be called a 'complex-free soul'.

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